

1.2 Website Accessibility Standards

PSG Number: SA-14-001

Topical Area: Web Design and Development

Issue Date: 11/1/2013

Effective Date: 11/1/2013

Document Type: Standard; Published (approved by Web Standards Group and GTA)

POC for Changes: Georgia.gov Interactive

Synopsis: Accessibility guidelines for State of Georgia web sites.

1.2.1 Purpose

All people should be able to enter your Web site and use its information. No physical or technological challenges should prevent their doing so. Numerous efforts are underway in government to ensure that all users have equal access to the Web. These web accessibility standards are intended to establish a baseline for coding and writing to ensure that all constituents have access to the information they need.

1.2.2 Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Priorities.

All websites owned and managed by state agencies SHALL meet at least the minimum standards for accessibility as defined by the W3C guidelines. (See w3.org/WAI for more information.) The W3C establishes conventions, standards and best practices that designers can use to ensure that their Web sites meet the mandate for international accessibility. You can test the validity of your site using a variety of software and online tools. A list is available at w3.org/WAI/eval.

Alternates and fallbacks.

You shall provide alternates, or fallbacks, for any information that is presented in any medium besides plain text. Some examples of alternates for common elements include:

- **Images** need a text description in the image tag

```
<img src=?image.jpg? alt=?Description of my image?>
```

- **Flash** - use the Accessibility tools built into Flash to make text accessible, and provide text descriptions for non-text elements.

- **Video** - provide a transcript of the audio, as well as a description of visual content (if applicable) of the video. HTML5 example:

```
<video src=?movie.ogg?>
<a href=?movie.txt?>get the transcript</a>
</video>
```

- **Audio** - provide a transcript. HTML5 example:

```
<audio src=?speech.mp3?>
<a href=?movie.txt?>get the transcript of this speech</a>
```

</audio>

Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) based on accessibility guidelines.

Use CSS to style your pages. Not only does CSS make web development easier, but it also helps display pages properly for people with disabilities and allows those visitors to customize pages to meet their accessibility requirements. Do not use tables to control page layout; use CSS to control layout.

Add ?Skip To? navigation so users can skip repetitive navigation or text.

A "Skip to Content" or "Skip Navigation" link at the top of the page allows users with screen readers or text-based browsers to skip to specific sections of a Web page.

Provide and test for ?graceful degradation.?

Designers should consider the current hardware, software and Internet connection that the average Web site reader will be using. At a minimum, follow these guidelines:

- **Turn off graphics** in your Web browser and view the pages to ensure that they can still be easily read and used.
- **Design your Web site for all major browsers.** If possible, use analytics tools to determine the browser versions used by 85-90% of your users, and optimize your site for those browsers. While your site may not need to look exactly the same in the lesser used browsers, be sure that any key content and all navigation still functions in the non-supported web browsers.
- **Try to avoid using browser plug-ins**, or position the material that depends on them deeper within your site. Use of Flash and other third-party plugins (such as Java, Shockwave, Quicktime) is discouraged. At minimum, key parts of your web page should not require elements such as Flash or Javascript to convey the information. For example, the navigation should not be built in Flash, nor should the navigation rely on Javascript in order to function. (See w3.org/WAI for more information.)

These guidelines are also reflected in more detail in the W3C's Accessibility Guidelines, and are noted as Priority 1 checkpoints from the W3C. For more details view the W3C Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0.

1.2.3 Section 508 Compliance

Section 508 Compliance is required for all federal government websites. Based on the federal mandate, they stand out as guidelines that **all State of Georgia websites** should follow in order to provide websites that are accessible. Below are the relevant Section 508 guidelines for Internet sites and applications that the Georgia.gov portal follows.

- Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element (e.g., via "alt", "longdesc", or in element content).
- Design web pages so that all information conveyed with color can also be understood without color. (e.g. Don't just highlight errors with red text; also note it with a symbol or Error text)

- Organize documents so they are readable without an associated style sheet.
- Provide additional text links for any item that is linked via an image map.
- Identify row and column headers in data tables.
- Use markup to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.
- If an iframe is required for functionality, it shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.
- Do not include any text or graphic elements that flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz (e.g. blinking text or flashing graphics).
- When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.
- Online forms shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.
- Use a skip-to content link at the top of a page that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.
- When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

1.2.4 Resources

- NonVisual Desktop Access (NVDA) - Screen Reader for Windows only
- Fangs Screen Reader Emulator - Firefox extension Screen Reader
- Color Contrast Analyzer

1.2.5 References

1. W3C Accessibility Guidelines
2. Accessibility Evaluation Tools
3. W3C Techniques for Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0
4. Section 508 Federal Accessibility Compliance

Source URL: <https://digitalservices.georgia.gov/web-standards/12-website-accessibility-standards>